

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 152 376

JC 780 198

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TITLE The Unmet Educational Needs of Full-Time Employees: A Phase II Needs Assessment for New Dimensions.
INSTITUTION Los Angeles Community Coll. District, Calif. Office of New Dimensions.
PUB DATE Nov 77
NOTE 45p.; For related documents see JC 780 196-197
EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.83 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Community Colleges; *Community Surveys; *Educational Needs; Educational Programs; *Employees; Employer Attitudes; *Employers; Institutional Research; *Junior Colleges; *Needs Assessment; Off the Job Training; On the Job Training; School Industry Relationship
IDENTIFIERS Employer Surveys

ABSTRACT

To ascertain the extent to which full-time employees in the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) service area would be interested in participating in non-campus based educational opportunities, a needs assessment was conducted. Employee needs that might be met by educational programs, existing employer-sponsored programs, and the extent to which employees participate in employment-based education or training programs were investigated through open-ended interviews with 25 employers representing 456,938 employees. Employer-offered educational programs included training for managers, job advancement/promotion, employee personal development, programs for entry level employees, basic skills, and programs for satisfactory job performance. Most employers were found to be interested in developing additional or improving existing programs. Principal areas for additional programs included supervision and all aspects of management, contemporary economics and budgeting, medical terminology and bilingual skills, consumer law, and basic communications skills. Barriers to supplementary education for employees, types of programs desired by employees, and unmet educational needs are discussed. (TR)

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THE UNMET EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES:

A PHASE II NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR NEW DIMENSIONS

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Research and Development Services

Office for New Dimensions

Los Angeles Community Colleges

November, 1977

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ED152376

JC 780 198

THE UNMET EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES:

A PHASE II NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR NEW DIMENSIONS

I. INTRODUCTION

In May, 1977, the New Students, New Services: A Phase I Needs Assessment for New Dimensions was printed by the Office for New Dimensions of the Los Angeles Community College District. That document identified three major areas which might be served through the educational programs of the Office for New Dimensions:

- A. Potential students for whom there might be barriers to regular college enrollment;
- B. Potential students with special learning needs and interests not generally available through regular college programs;
- C. Potential students and other participants in programs broad in scope and designed for the District as a whole.

As a result of the Phase I study, it was estimated that an additional 60,000 potential new students could be attracted to participate in educational programs offered by the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD).

Among those identified as having barriers to participation in educational programs were the full-time employed community residents. As noted in the Phase I report:

Eighty percent of U.S. adult males are currently employed and 47 percent of adult women. In a recent survey of more than 8,000 LACCD students, 63 percent of the part-time respondents were working more than 30 hours a week. Of those working more than 30 hours a week, 83 percent were enrolled during the evening. These proportions are in direct contrast to full-time, day students, 20 percent of whom work more than 30 hours a week.

Those employed full-time do have less access to education, either in pursuit of degrees or for the purpose of job or self improvement. Part-time enrollment in evening classes, particularly for those living near a campus site, has been an attractive alternative for the full-time employed. Evening campus classes should not be the only alternative.

Additionally, it was pointed out that in Los Angeles County "...over 350,000 adults would be interested in some form of employment-based education, both for job advancement and to meet certification and licensure requirements".

The following table provides information on the employers who participated in this study:

TABLE 1
Total Numbers of Employees Represented by
Number and Type of Employers Studied

Type of Employer	Number Interviewed	Number of Employees Represented
Banking & Finance	4	69,000
Transportation	2	7,788
Manufacturing	7	132,950
Retailing	3	73,500
Health Care	3	13,100
Public Service & Utilities	4	157,500
Entertainment & Media	2	3,100
Totals	25	456,938

It should be noted that the employer organizations participating in this study ranged in individual size from 400 to more than 70,000 employees and, as can be seen from Table 1, account for a total of nearly one half million employees working within the LACCD.

Each employer was contacted by the researchers and an appointment was made with the personnel director and/or the training director for a personal interview. In a few instances, a personal appointment was not possible and the interview was conducted by telephone. The personnel directors and/or the training directors were contacted and interviewed because they were most closely associated with the educational programming efforts designed to upgrade and maintain the performance levels of employees within their respective companies. Additionally, these individuals occupied high level administrative positions within their organizations which gave them a broad-based understanding of the educational needs of their employees in terms of their employment

responsibilities and tasks.

It should be pointed out that 100% of all employers contacted agreed to participate and, indeed, were enthusiastic about the study. Moreover, while the investigators initially anticipated spending no more than one hour per interview, in most cases, the interview period extended to two or more hours. Employers invariable felt that a study such as this was both timely and relevant. Many requested feedback at the completion of the study in the form of summary findings.

The investigators developed and utilized an open-ended interview schedule (See Appendix A) which permitted individual employers to explain how education related to job performance, job promotion and advancement, and employee personal development within the specific context of their business. The interview schedule also allowed employers to describe the nature of their current educational programs and the extent to which they would be interested in establishing additional programs, either independently or in cooperation with an external agency. Overall, this method proved to be very effective in eliciting data from the employers.

Data resulting from the interviews with the employers were content analyzed with the result that certain trends were identified. Because of the diverse nature of the employers interviewed and because each employer performed a very specific and frequently unique function within the overall employment sector, quantitative analyses of common factors was precluded.

In order to ascertain the actual extent to which full-time employees in the LACCD service area would be interested in participating in some form of non-campus based educational opportunities, a Phase II Needs Assessment was conducted. The principal purposes of this study were:

1. To determine the extent to which employers in the LACCD area identified needs among their various employees that might be met by educational programs;
2. To determine what programs, if any, employers currently offer their employees (either on-site or off-site the place of employment), and;
3. To ascertain the extent to which employees participate in available employment-based educational or training programs.

Since the Cooperative Programs Institute of the Office for New Dimensions is intended to be responsive to the identified educational needs of employers and employees within the LACCD, it was felt necessary to obtain the information sought by this study in order to assist the Institute in effective program development and implementation.

II METHODOLOGY

Various employers representing diverse business and industrial organizations were identified as potential respondents to an extensive interview schedule designed to provide information relevant to the objectives of this study. The employers participating in the study were selected primarily because of their range of size in terms of numbers of employees and because of the nature of their organizations' work function which represented a diversity of employee work roles requiring potential educational and training programs.

The selection of employers rather than employees for interview subjects in this study was decided by the investigators for various reasons. First, time and budgetary constraints restricted the number of individuals to be interviewed. Thus, it seemed more reasonable that an equal number of employers as employees would provide more meaningful and broader-based information relevant to the study. Secondly, logistical problems related to employee time off to participate in interviews at the employment site would have been insurmountable in most instances. Lastly, and most importantly, the investigators were confident that the information needed for this study could be adequately provided by the employers. Most certainly, employer identification of employment-based educational needs, their sponsorship of such programs independent of or in cooperation with a community college, and employer sanction and encouragement for employees to participate in such programs would condition the success of educational programs which might be offered.

III STUDY CONCLUSIONS

CLIENT
GROUP

DISCUSSION

EDUCATIONAL
PROGRAMS.

For the purpose of reporting the findings of this study, three broad categories will be employed:

- o Existing programs;
- o Relationship of employee education to job performance and promotion; and
- o Extent of employer interest in further programs.

A. Existing Educational Programs:

Overall, only one surveyed employer reported not having some form of educational program for employees. Notably, this employer was the smallest, in terms of number of employees. The remaining employers interviewed did have some form of existing educational program for employees. These programs took a variety of forms:

Employer
Sponsored
Employees

1. Tuition Reimbursement -- Employers generally were found to pay from 75% to 100% of an employee's tuition and materials expenses when the employee enrolled and completed courses of study that bore some relationship to the employee's present job or to some future position dependent upon the employee's educational attainment. Only one employer (a public employer) paid for the employees' tuition in advance of course or program completion.

Tuition
Reimbursement

CLIENT
GROUP

DISCUSSION

EDUCATIONAL
PROGRAM

Line and
Management
Personnel

2. In-house Training -- Several employers were found to provide programs for their employees that were, in terms of content, specifically relevant to the employers' business or operation. These programs ranged from set-up and operation of a particular type of manufacturing equipment to sophisticated management techniques. In-house training opportunities were generally found to be available more frequently to management and supervisory level personnel than to production workers or line personnel.

In-House
Training

Selected
Personnel
Groups

3. Off-site Programs -- Employers were found, in some cases, to have contractual agreements with outside agencies that offered to employees formal instruction in specific areas. Some of these programs offered training in areas such as business administration, budgeting, programming, finance, human relations, conflict resolution and others. Generally, these programs were more extensive than the in-house seminars, programs, and workshops, both in terms of substance and in terms of the resources needed to carry them out. Only four employers utilized this type of program with any frequency.

Off-Site
Programs

Voluntary
Employee
Enrollment

4. Cooperative Programs -- Employers quite frequently utilized educational programs, either on-site, or both, which were made available by external agencies. These programs usually had "industry-wide" relevance or were specifically developed by an outside agency for use in the setting of an individual organization. Among those external agencies and institutions offering such cooperative programs were the American Institute of Banking, the Institute of Financial Education, various community colleges in the Los Angeles area, UCLA Extension program, USC, and other colleges and universities in the Los Angeles area. Several employers were found to print and distribute to their employees schedules of classes, educational bulletins, and other announcements about educational program offerings including the location and time the courses would be offered, and procedures explaining to employees the necessary steps necessary to enroll.

Cooperative
Programs

CLIENT
GROUP

DISCUSSION

EDUCATIONAL
PROGRAM

B. Relationship of Education to Jobs:

New
Entrants

Generally, it was found that the relationship between post-employment training or education for employees and satisfactory job performance and job advancement or promotion is somewhat vague. In some cases, employees are required to undergo formal, on-the-job training in order to become knowledgeable and competent in understanding the policies, procedures, and operational methods of the organization. In other instances, this is not the case; employees are required to bring minimal levels of knowledge, experience, and competency to the job situation. In these cases, on-the job training is most commonly used to supplement the expertise and skills possessed by the employee.

Employer
Educational
Requirements

Employee-
Initiated
Education

Upwardly
Mobile
Employees

In yet other cases, education and training is made relevant to an employee's advancement potential. Five organizations surveyed, for example, utilize a system of employee evaluation in which employees are evaluated and appraised of their needs for development which would permit their advancement and promotion in the organization. In these five instances, completion of formal educational programs is often considered to have a direct relationship to their promotability.

Education for
Advancement

Management

The findings also indicate that employers generally rely upon educational or training programs to upgrade their management personnel. Generally, management and supervisory personnel were found more likely to have educational opportunities available to them than were available to non-management or line employees.

Programs for
Job Improvement

C. Summary of Existing Programs:

Table 2 presents the survey findings about types of existing training and educational programs offered by employers to their employees.

Table 2

All Employees

Existing Educational Programs Offered by Employers
In Numbers and Percent

Existing
Program
Types

Type of Program	Number of Employers	Percent of Employers
Training for Managers	18	72%
Job Advancement/Promotion	7	28%
Employee Personal Development	4	16%
For Entry Level Employees	9	36%
Basic Skills	5	20%
Satisfactory Job Performance	19	76%

D. Employer Interest In Additional Programs:

Current
Employee
Subject
Interest

Most employers were found to be interested in developing additional educational programs for employees or in improving their existing programs. Nineteen (19) out of the twenty-five (25) employers surveyed answered "Yes" to the question: "Would you be interested in having a LACCD professional staff member provide more information to you about educational and training programs?" The principal concern over adding programs, according to the employers surveyed, is cost. Given a commitment on the part of an employer to continuing education for employees, it is more

Additional
Educational
Programs

likely that an employer will adopt a new program where cost is a nominal consideration. Principal areas of expressed interest in additional programs include:

- o Supervision and all aspects of management;
- o Contemporary economics, budgeting,
- o Medical terminology and bilingual skills;
- o Consumer law;
- o Employee personal development;
- o Basic communication skills;
- o Other job-related skills.

Barriers to
Supplementary
Education
for Employees

As previously stated, cost is an important factor to employers. In most cases, employers responded favorably to the idea of credit courses at no extra cost to them: second choices were non-credit courses for a small fee. Little interest was expressed in contractual arrangements for courses. This preference ranking is clearly understandable when examination of the "education market" is undertaken. Numerous community colleges, college extension programs, private associations, individual consultants, and professional training organizations are in active competition for the training of organizations' employees. But, while there is considerable competition in this educational and training arena, it must be noted that employers were found to be keenly aware that only colleges can offer courses and programs leading to an accredited degree. Thus, a great deal of the competition in this market is attenuated.

Program
Cost
Factors

Table 3 presents findings about training programs desired by employers.

Table 3

All Employed
PersonnelTypes of Programs Desired by Employers
In Numbers and PercentEmployer
Educational
Program
Preference

Type of Program	Number	Percent
Supervisors and Managers	10	40%
Job Advancement and Promotion	2	8%
Employee Personal Development and General Education	3	12%
Training for Entry Level Employees	3	12%
Basic Skills	8	32%
Satisfactory Job Performance	1	4%

E. Unmet Educational Needs:Employee
Potential
Enrollment

There are unmet needs for educational opportunities among LACCD area employees. The program areas of interest listed above and shown in Table 3 reflect the most commonly found needs during the survey. But, access to educational programs for individuals employed full-time is of considerable importance when discussing needs. Clearly, if programs

Educational
Information

of expressed interest were immediately made available to employees, there are reasons to question whether any significant number of employees would in fact participate. Time and distance, particularly in the spread out metropolitan area of Los Angeles, combine to present a major barrier to the participation of individuals employed on a full-time basis. Therefore, programs which present a solution to this type of problem are particularly attractive to both employers and to employees.

The survey findings indicate that perhaps the single most important currently unmet need as derived from the interviews with employers is their need for more information about what programs might be available to them. For example, at least half of the employers interviewed had not, in their recollection, ever had any contact with community college representatives or any other college or university for the purpose of being informed about available educational programs.

F. Educational Barriers:

Employee
Released
Time

Any consideration of educational program development for full-time employers must take potential barriers to employee participation into consideration. While some of the employers surveyed indicated that released time from the job would be permitted for employees to attend instructional classes directly related to their work assignments, most indicated that training beyond that necessary to perform satisfactorily on their jobs could best be accomplished before or after work. Employers generally agreed that such training could be conducted on the job site.

Work
Related
Training

CLIENT
GROUP

DISCUSSION

EDUCATIONAL
PROGRAMS

Convenient
On-Site
Location
for Employees

In essence, employers in most cases believed that training required by the employer should be conducted during normal working hours. Voluntary participation in training or education for job advancement or for personal development, however, should be conducted after or before working hours. It is in this latter category, voluntary enrollment for personal development and to enhance promotional opportunities, that employers identified the following barriers to participation by employees:

Supplementary
Educational
Programs

Employee
Barriers
to Participation

- o Family responsibilities of employees did not permit them to remain on the job site beyond the normal work day;
- o Commuting distance and time were believed to discourage employees from participating, particularly in situations where car pooling was practiced;
- o Lack of interest on the part of employees. In most cases the employers have conducted various work related activities designed to enlist voluntary participation from their employees. Consistently, most employers indicated that only 10% to 15% actually participate. In a few instances however, notably in the health care and entertainment/media sectors, voluntary participation was reported to reach as high as 80% by employees. The activities described here were not leisure time activities sponsored by the employer, but rather activities which could help an employee increase his/her opportunities for promotion, earn more income, and assume greater employment responsibilities. Volunteering for overtime work is an example of such activities.

Voluntary
Participation
in Education

The Potential Role of New Dimensions:

Without question, the Office of New Dimensions is in a unique position to respond to the needs of full-time employees for educational programs. While employer support is essential to develop and implement an effective program, there were found to be many indications that a cooperative relationship between the Office for New Dimensions staff and Los Angeles area employers can be readily established. Additionally,

New Dimensions' commitment to flexible, innovative programs and delivery systems is a very positive asset and could prove attractive and valuable to employers. The ability to develop programs, both general and specific, and to deliver such programs on short notice is important to employers and a challenge to the New Dimensions staff.

Conclusion and Recommendations:

This study of twenty-five Los Angeles Community College District area employers has strongly and convincingly demonstrated that there exists a need for employment site educational programs. Even though there are other organizations, consultant firms, public and private educational institutions, and educational associations that supplement the efforts of employers to provide training and educational programs to employees, there still remains a wide margin between all existing programs and the interest and needs expressed by the employers surveyed. This survey pointed out that with a strong emphasis on flexibility, the Office for New Dimensions can meet many of these needs if:

1. Educational programs can be developed that can meet the diverse and specific educational and training needs identified by diverse employer organizations.
2. Educational programs can be delivered via flexible delivery systems that clearly focus upon the time schedules and convenience of employers and employees.
3. The Office for New Dimensions is able to draw upon and combine its wide array of educational resources from within the LACCD.

Based upon the findings of this study, the following policy recommendations are made:

1. A staff member should be designated in the Office for New Dimensions to be clearly identified for employers as the individual primarily responsible for on-site employment based educational programs. This person should maintain continuous and regular contact with employers and employer organizations.

2. In some instances, employers were unclear about the organizational structure of the Office for New Dimensions within the LACCD. This becomes critical in instances where employers already have on-going cooperative relationships with any of the LACCD campuses. It is therefore recommended that the New Dimensions staff person assigned to work with employers be identified as the pivotal staff member of the LACCD for employer-based educational programs and assume the specific task of trouble-shooter for problems that may arise in the overall operation of these programs.
3. Program development and implementation should proceed as a completely cooperative effort between the LACCD and the employers. Initially, programs should emphasize and assure that qualitative educational services to employers and their employees are delivered.
4. Follow-up evaluative procedures should be established so that feedback on program effectiveness is continuously obtained from employers. The instructional programs should be jointly evaluated by both employers and the New Dimensions staff.
5. The LACCD should recognize its unique organizational strengths and its ability to meet the educational needs of employers and employees. However, the New Dimensions staff should also recognize areas where it does not have the resources or is not the suitable agency to meet some specific educational need. In those situations, the Office for New Dimensions could provide a very useful service by serving as a clearing-house for employers by referring them to the appropriate educational institution best suited to meet the particular need.

7

APPENDIX: EMPLOYER SURVEY

EMPLOYER SURVEY

1. Name of Business or Industry _____
2. Type of Business or Industry _____
3. Total number of employees in your organization:

_____ Less than 10	_____ 101 to 200	_____ 801 to 1500
_____ 11 to 50	_____ 201 to 400	_____ 1501 to 2500
_____ 51 to 100	_____ 401 to 800	_____ More than 2500
4. How many entry-level employees do you currently employ?
5. How many supervisory and management personnel do you currently employ? _____.
6. How many women do you currently employ? _____.
7. How many members of minority groups do you currently employ? _____.
8. What additional competencies or skills do your employees need for:

SATISFACTORY JOB PERFORMANCE

Supervisors/Management	Entry Level	Women	Minorities
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

JOB ADVANCEMENT/PROMOTION

Supervisor/Management

Entry Level

Women

Minorities

EMPLOYEE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT/GENERAL EDUCATION

Supervisor/Managment

Entry Level

Women

Minorities

9. Does your company have a formal company sponsored training program for:

SATISFACTORY JOB PERFORMANCE

Supervisor/Managment

Entry Level

Women

Minorities

JOB ADVANCEMENT/PROMOTION

Supervisor/Management

Entry Level

Women

Minorities

EMPLOYEE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT/GENERAL EDUCATION

Supervisor/Management

Entry Level

Women

Minorities

10. If one exists, is employee participation in your company's training program mandatory or voluntary regarding:

SATISFACTORY JOB PERFORMANCE

____ Supervisor/Managment

____ Entry Level

____ Women

____ Minorities

EMPLOYEE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT/GENERAL EDUCATION

____ Supervisor/Management

____ Entry Level

____ Women

____ Minorities

11. Would you like to see your organization engage in an on-site training or educational program for your employees in cooperation with a community college? _____ Yes _____ No
12. If answer is "yes" to previous question, what kind of programs and for which employees?

SATISFACTORY JOB PERFORMANCE

Supervisors/Managment

Entry Level

Women

Minorities

JOB ADVANCEMENT/PROMOTION

Supervisor/Managment

Entry Level

Women

Minorities

EMPLOYEE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT/GENERAL EDUCATION

Supervisor/Management	Entry Level	Women	Minorities
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

13. If your organization became involved in a cooperative education program with a community college, what period of the day and of the year would you prefer for the following purposes and employee groups:

SATISFACTORY JOB PERFORMANCE

Supervisor/Management	Entry Level	Women	Minorities
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

JOB ADVANCEMENT/PROMOTION

Supervisor/Management	Entry Level	Women	Minorities
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

EMPLOYEE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT/GENERAL EDUCATION

Supervisor/Management	Entry Level	Women	Minorities
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

14. Would your company permit paid release time for your employees to participate in a company/college cooperative educational program for any of the following:

SATISFACTORY JOB PERFORMANCE

Supervisor/Management	Entry Level	Women	Minorities
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

JOB ADVANCEMENT/PROMOTION

Supervisor/Management	Entry Level	Women	Minorities
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

EMPLOYEE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT/GENERAL EDUCATION

Supervisor/Management	Entry Level	Women	Minoriti
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

15. Which of the following ways of offering a college/company cooperative program would be most attractive to your company?

- _____ Open-enrollment, no cost, regular college credit courses offered on-site.
- _____ Open-enrollment, small fee, non-credit courses or programs offered on-site through the LACCD community services division.
- _____ Closed-enrollment, tailor-made programs, courses, workshops, seminars, or continuing education unit programs on a contract basis.
- _____
- _____
- _____

16. Would it be useful for a community college to design a specific training program for your employees and company? _____ Yes _____ No

If answer is "yes", in what areas of training? _____

17. Would you be interested in cooperatively developing a "college within the company" where a comprehensive education could be made available to employees?

_____ Yes

_____ No

_____ Not Sure

18. What would you identify as potential barriers to employee participation in on-site education programs for:

Supervisors/Managers _____

Entry Level _____

Women _____

Minorities _____

19. Would you be interested in having an LACCD professional staff member provide more information about educational and training programs?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not Sure

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